

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2013, 6:00 PM
GORHAM TOWN HALL**

Gorham Selectmen present: Bill Jackson, Jeff Schall, Paul Robitaille

Also present: Robin L. Frost, Town Manager; Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk; Lisa Kardell, Terry Rhoderick, Mike Waddell, Skip Sansoucy; Gail Scott, Berlin Daily Sun

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by Chairman Robitaille. At this time, Selectman Schall was not present for the meeting. Therefore, the Board agreed to move to the Town Manager's Update until Selectman Schall was present to discuss the 2012 Abatements. The Board, TM Frost and Mr. Sansoucy agreed to move the agenda items around to better suit the fact that there will be a non-public session at the end of the meeting. Therefore, the appointment with Mr. Sansoucy will be moved to the last item on the agenda.

2. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost informed the Board that the 4th of July Committee was looking to close a portion of Railroad Street for the July 4th carnival/festivities. The actual dates that the Committee is looking to close the street is from July 1 to July 7. TM Frost informed the Board that this is the usual time that the street is closed. Further discussion took place; **Selectman Jackson made a motion to allow the closure of Railroad Street from July 1 to July 7, seconded by Selectman Schall, voted unanimously.**

TM Frost informed the Board that she had received another request from Muddy Paws Sled Dogs. Muddy Paws is looking to participate in the parade and would like to have a meet and greet session with the dogs prior to the parade on the common. Muddy Paws will make sure that they clean up the area when they are completed with the meet and greet. Selectman Jackson asked if they had insurance. TM Frost believed that they do, but would check to make sure. **Selectman Jackson made a motion to allow Muddy Paws Sled Dogs access to the Town Common for a meet and greet so long as insurance is in place, seconded by Selectman Schall, Jackson – Aye; Shall – Aye; Robitaille - Nay.**

b) Selectmen's Updates: There were none.

d) Sign Manifest: All manifests were signed.

e) Sign Abatements and Exemptions (if necessary): There were none.

3. New Business:

a) 2012 Abatements: Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk, presented the Board with a spreadsheet that contains a list of abatement requests along with recommendations from KRT Appraisers and went on to inform the Board that five abatement requests had been denied, noting the letter from Mr. Sansoucy stating such. AC Lutz went on to tell the Board that the reason for the denials is because the property owners failed to provide the necessary information for review of the request. Further discussion took place regarding this list; Selectman Jackson asked AC Lutz if the \$255,200 assessed value of the Twin Light Properties was a number placed on the property by KRT Appraisers. AC Lutz informed Selectman Jackson that yes; they had assessed the property at that amount. Selectman Jackson asked if that number was a big mistake, or if there were changes to the property. Further discussion took place regarding when the property was assessed versus when the building permits were pulled

and how far along the remodeling was by April 1st. AC Lutz told the Board that she would pull together the information that was needed and get it to them. Further discussion took place regarding the abatement list, with Chairman Robitaille noting that there was a Board member that had property on the list. The Board agreed to take out properties: Kardell, Twin Lights and Schall. After further discussion, Selectman Jackson moved to accept the recommendations presented by KRT Appraisals that was before them with the exceptions of Kardell, Twin Lights and Schall, seconded by Chairman Robitaille, it was then opened for discussion. Selectman Jackson felt that in all fairness to Mrs. Kardell the Board had not seen her letter and he did not want to move on it. At this time the Board opened the floor to Mrs. Kardell. Mrs. Kardell informed the Board of discrepancies that she felt needed to be considered in the assessed value of her home, which included: acreage, cathedral ceilings with attic space included, the fact that there is only a possibility of three bedrooms, the condition of the home went from being rated a level three condition to a five plus condition, roof and deck issues. Mrs. Kardell went on to tell the Board that the biggest problem that they are faced with is the mold and radon levels in the lower space, noting that at this point in time that space is unusable. Mrs. Kardell expressed her concern regarding the change in rating with all the issues that the home is currently experiencing. After further discussion, the Board asked Mrs. Kardell for copies of the radon and mold reports.

Selectman Schall recused himself from the Board to discuss his property. Mr. Schall informed the Board that he pulled together a spreadsheet with six properties used as comparables to his property. While in his haste to get to the Board meeting, he had inadvertently left them behind. However, Mr. Schall noted that some of these properties were assessed at half of what his home is assessed at. Mr. Schall informed the Board that the apartment that is above the garage is a non-income based apartment, and it is a two-room apartment. Mr. Schall stated that the house is a three-bedroom home and that he feels it is overvalued. Selectman Jackson asked Mr. Schall to get the spreadsheet to the Board for their review.

After further discussion, **Selectman Jackson made a motion to move Twin Lights, Schall and Kardell abatements to the June 17 meeting, seconded by Chairman Robitaille, voted as follows Jackson – Aye; Robitaille – Aye.**

Mr. Schall returned to his seat on the Board.

4. Appointments:

a) Skip Sansoucy - Utilities: Mr. Sansoucy and the Board agreed to leave the litigation matters for last for the non-public session. Mr. Sansoucy began the meeting by informing the Board that of the \$273 million dollars of assessment value the Town currently has in place, the utilities make up \$64 million of that amount. Mr. Sansoucy went on to say that there is only a small group of communities that have a double-digit percentage rate that equates to utilities, noting that Gorham is in the top 10. Mr. Sansoucy also informed the Board that based on the market, the values of utilities has remained up, while home values have gone down. Mr. Sansoucy expressed concern about the Town's current equalization rate, noting that the value of utilities will decrease 8% because the Town's equalization rate has gone down. Mr. Sansoucy informed the Board and TM Frost that it is important to manage the equalization rate, stating that the assessing office and Selectmen should be keeping track of local real estate sales, noting that the State uses that information when determining the Town's equalization rate. Mr. Sansoucy went on to say the Town needs to consider the equalization rate when reviewing abatements. Further discussion took place regarding the equalization rate and measures the Town can take to monitor what the rate may be for the coming year.

4. Old Business: There was nothing noted on the Agenda.

5. Public Comment: None

7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-a:3, II e: On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Chairman Robitaille, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to move into Non-Public Session at 7:37 pm. Jackson –aye, Robitaille – aye, Schall - aye.

On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Chairman Robitaille, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to return to Public Session at 8:26 pm. Jackson –aye, Robitaille – aye, Schall - aye.

There were no decisions made as a result of the non-public session.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 PM.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Paul Robitaille

William H. Jackson

Jeff Schall